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London Fiasco

WHATEVER drops and trickles of miscellaneous information have been allowed to percolate—or rather to leak—from the sessions at Lancaster House—and from other, less formal sessions held in its neighborhood—irresistibly remind one of a group of small boys acting with all the petulance and obstinacy of the very young. Indeed the impression they make upon the ordinary observer is tragically bad. Now it is altogether possible that these impressions are ill-founded and arise because of the ridiculous policy the conference has pursued with regard to the press. Yet this very policy is a juvenile policy (the young conspirators!) and may in the end prove the most apposite symbol of a badly botched job.

On this subject of press relations a number of things have frequently been said in the past and need to be said now, as they doubtless will again need to be said in the future. It is of course entirely true that no human beings can negotiate delicate matters in a goldfish bowl—let alone with all the world and his wife eagerly breathing down the necks of the negotiators. Hence it is perfectly proper that the actual process of negotiation be private and confidential. But since secrecy ever constitutes a threat to honesty and decency, it is of primary importance that the general gist of what goes on at a conference, of what is settled and what is not settled—and if not why not—be available to the people whose very lives and future welfare are at stake. In an age which did not possess rapid mechanical means of communication, the whole procedure could be conducted with far more decorum, since no one expected for an instant to be kept informed play by play. It was sufficient if the final report proved frank and satisfactory. Unfortunately we no longer live in such an age—and most people would not even use the adverb *unfortunately*. We are used to spot news reports on negotiations between nations, and hence the technique of negotiations has radically altered. What is necessary today is a carefully drawn line between ensuring the necessary minimum of privacy and the even more necessary maximum of public awareness. The formula is subtle and hard to put your finger on, but if in a given instance a proper formula is not found, people very soon become aware of it and the entire outcome is jeopardized.

At the London Conference a proper formula has not been found, and the result jeopardizes our hope of a decent peace and of avoiding armed strife in the future. Let us remember—let Messrs. Byrnes, Bevin and Molotov also remember—that armed strife now means the application of atomic energy to the wanton destruction of human life *en masse*. It certainly does, for have we not—we, a nation constantly claiming to fight on the side of the angels—legitimized the use of the atomic bomb by being the first to use it?

So we learn that the representative of the socialist fatherland does not like a British Foreign Minister who calls himself a socialist and who flaunts his proletarian origin. Mr. Molotov prefers Anthony Eden—who calls himself a conservative and who could not by the wildest stretch of the imagination boast of being born without a silver spoon. Mr. Molotov likewise prefers Mr. Hull to Mr. Byrnes. We have our reservations about both these gentlemen. But we suspect that Mr. Molotov's preferences are entirely personal whereas we hope that our own are based somewhat on performance.

The immediate trouble here, we are forced to conclude, lies in the more maddening traits of the contemporary Russian character. We have often pointed to them in the past, and been reviled for doing so. They are new-rich traits. Big gestures, "toughness" in negotiations, suspiciousness. Never let yourself be caught in a position where a rival out-splurges you. Henry Clay Frick, they used to say on Fifty-Seventh Street, would not even consider buying a picture which had been seen previously by one of his millionaire rivals. Nothing will do for the Soviet Trade Commission but the J. P. Morgan Estate on Long Island. And as for the "toughness," it more closely resembles the childish obstinacy of

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an arrived Horatio Alger hero than it resembles the firmness so often essential in negotiation. Not that (from what we read in the papers) either Mr. Byrnes or Mr. Bevin are without fault; they are far from it. But their patience, and the patience of all others concerned, have been sorely tried. It is not in the interests of a decent future to pretend otherwise.

Invitation to a Voyage

THE DISAPPOINTMENTS come but we are prepared for the disappointments; it would be something else that would astonish us; we know that the peace will be hard to make, and that it will be difficult to build quickly and cleanly anywhere with the wind and the dust in the ruins; no one has any too immediate hopes. There was a certain determination all through the war to make a peace after the war and that determination still exists; it makes for a certain amount of hope; it nourishes the obstinate hope that can withstand the disappointments. We are more or less ready, more or less prepared and determined to keep our hope in the future, expecting every difficulty that anyone can invent—the pilgrim's progress—prepared to find that innumerable difficulties will be invented, admitting none of them to be insuperable. We are like the crew of a ship (even before there was a compass that one could trust, before steam, before radio), we go down to the wharf with the families, the friends, to see us sail for Europe, for China, knowing all the dangers of the sea but confident that a ship can be sailed by men determined.

If that is the way we feel about the future, it is because we think that the past has been taken care of. If we are advancing into the future, it is because we feel that the past has been left behind. If we have any hope and confidence that we can find our way in the dark future, it is because we think we have come out of the black hour of the immediate past. In victory that is what we saw: the moment in which the war could be said to be in the past, and not just the fighting, the moment in which all who had been enslaved were free. We think we can look forward because there was a moment when the war ended, and the cruelties of the war are not with us now; they are memories; they are not at our side. That is what we are saying to ourselves, prepared for the difficulties and disappointments of the future, saying that the war is over, the fighting is over, the past is the past, the concentrations camps are emptied. . . .

They are not emptied. One hundred thousand Jews are in concentration camps in Germany, in that part of Germany not under Russian occupation. "We appear to be treating the Jews as the Nazis treated them, except that we do not exterminate them. They are in concentration camps in large numbers under our military guard instead of SS troops." (Harrison Report to the President.)

The past is here in the present; we are not free of the past. "Many of the Jewish displaced persons, late in July, had no clothing other than their concentration camp garb—a rather hideous striped pyjama effect—while others, to their chagrin, were obliged to wear German SS uniforms . . . the internees, for they are literally such, have little to do except to dwell upon their plight, the uncertainty of their future and, what is more unfortunate, to draw comparisons between their treatment 'under the Germans' and 'in liberation.' . . . Beyond knowing that they are no longer in danger of the gas chambers, torture and other forms of violent death, they see—and there is—little change."

No doubt there soon will be a change. The Army says that already there has been a change. These Jews in Germany desire to leave Germany. The report recommends that they be allowed into Palestine; also, "in reasonable numbers" and "under existing immigration laws," into this country.

For these 100,000 Jews to be permitted to live anywhere at all out of the concentration camps will be a change, and it seems very possible that a not inconsiderable number of them will survive long enough to see once more what the world looks like beyond the barbed wire that holds them prisoner. Under "existing immigration laws" a few may see America. The civilized nations of the world may find a Guiana, or an Ethiopia, or there may be some island somewhere that the civilized nations may buy with mirrors from the natives and present to the Jews whom we guard now in Germany. For them the trip to the island will be a change.

But for us it will not be a change; it will not be a liberation; it will not free us from this past that suddenly we find is still the present. These generous proposals to segregate the Jews anywhere anywhere out of the world in which we live, this invitation to a voyage, this one-way passage suggested, indicate only that we are held still in a most immediate and shameful past that binds us to our enemies.

Bringing Back the Dutch

NOTHING more strikingly poses the problem of the world's colonial empires than the present situation in the Dutch East Indies. The Dutch themselves are not again in possession yet, nor has an occupying force even set out from Holland. The British have confined themselves to occupying Java's two principal cities. Evidences of the natives' desire for complete independence continue to accumulate. There has been no overt

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Javanese objection to the British, but trouble is expected when Dutch forces attempt to reoccupy the islands they lost to the Japanese four years ago.

To square the continuance of such colonial empires with the ideal of the four freedoms is naturally impossible. Although some of the inspiration for Annamese rebellion against French authorities and Javanese resentment against the Dutch can be traced to the Japanese, there can be no question as to the genuineness of native aspirations. The United States supports the Dutch and the French and the British in these matters apparently on the theory that the world is not yet ready for so sweeping a development as the independence of colonial peoples. That is too radical a step. We do not particularly want these islands for the Dutch, these territories for the French, these resources and markets for the British. What we are trying to do in this instance is to uphold the entire shaky colonial structure for as long as it will stand. That is part of the beloved *status quo*. We believe it to be in the national interest to join with the Dutch, the French and the British—and presumably with the Belgians and the Portuguese—in seeking to stem the tide of native self-determination the whole world over. Our exemplary conduct thus far in the Philippines notwithstanding.

Is it the part of wisdom to help reestablish the sovereignty of Holland (7,000,000 people) over the Dutch East Indies (70,000,000's)? Queen Wilhelmina's promise of eventual full partnership exercises little attraction for the Indonesians. One big unanswered question is whether the Javanese and others have been kept in such a state of tutelage by Wilhelmina's subjects that they would not be ready for self-government for several years. To counterbalance this there is the consideration that the East Indies could hardly find a period in which they would be better protected from aggression than in the years which lie just ahead. If they were granted independence or at least full autonomy of the British Dominion type, their first uncertain steps of statehood could proceed with little danger that they would be rudely interrupted by a foreign invader.

Being adamant on the colonial question as the British often are plays of course right into the hands of the Soviets, who can continue to pose as hostile to imperialism and as champions of the principle of self-determination. And it must be admitted by all hands that the days of nineteenth century colonial empires are numbered. Will it not fire native ambitions to the boiling point to seek to suppress what simply is inevitable? This appears to be a situation in which the interests of the United States point in the opposite direction to that pursued by the Dutch and British.

The danger of a war between white and the colored races in some future decade is not too lightly to be discounted. Our treatment of our own citizens of Negro, Latin and Mongol extraction is bad enough. Let us not compound this evil by lending a hand to the subjection of colored people by our allies in this global war. What to do in a positive direction is not so clear beyond the example we could set—politically and economically—in the Philippines, Puerto Rico and other American possessions. In the international sphere some questions are closed questions. Russia has a fist-full, we have ours, the British have their empire. It is hard to see what we could accomplish by friendly representations. The colonial situation is complex; it cannot be settled in a day simply by such measures as complete withdrawal. But it is increasingly obvious that certain grave errors America must avoid.

The Food Situation

THERE WILL be no argument here this week about our food surpluses and the needs of foreign peoples. It is not that we are giving up the fight for adequate shipments of American foodstuffs. But the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations has just published a country-by-country survey which dispenses with the necessity for argument. The need as estimated by areas is: Continental Europe: 18,000,000 tons of food, mostly wheat; North Africa: 2,000,000 tons of grain plus certain quantities of fats, oils and sugar; the United Kingdom: 9,500,000 tons of wheat, meats, sugar, dairy products, fats and oils; the Far East: 3 to 4,000,000 tons, mostly cereals. The report's conclusion as to Europe: "It is thus plain that only substantial food imports from outside sources can save millions of Europeans from near-starvation in the coming winter."

New Formula for Political Controversy

READERS who are dismayed by the complexity of the domestic and international problems that face us, or who are discouraged by certain unblinkable facts, should take heart. There is a formula which can be applied in every emergency. It has been dreamed up by the *Catholic Mirror* of Springfield, Massachusetts. In the September issue this diocesan paper writes of a young COMMONWEAL correspondent who deplored the attitude of American Catholic papers toward Russia: She "accuses Catholics of having 'absolutely no idea of the harm they are doing.' The harm we Catholics appear to be doing is: the malignant provocation of war against Russia. In the young woman's contribution there are all the elements of a mortal sin of calumny except sufficient reflection." What more effective way could there be of dismissing an opponent!

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Capitalism's Achilles Heel

A farewell to all half measures

George H. Dunne

THE GREAT DEBATE about the nature of the economic problem and its solution was suspended by the war. The full release of the productive energies of this country brought a measure of solution—for the time being. Idle capital was put to work; the wheels of industry, old and new, were set in vigorous motion; a small degree of hope entered even the dismal alley-ways of the slums; the itinerant Okies were surprised and a little unbalanced by an unaccustomed prosperity; despite food rationing, fewer people were hungry; all who could and would work found employment; the haunting fear of insecurity was forgotten; the grim specter of want was no longer seen in many of his old familiar haunts.

The war, however, brought no real solution, providing only temporary surcease from the worry and fret of trying to grapple with the problem within the framework of an economic system and an economic philosophy whose day is done.

It can also be frankly admitted that the efforts of the several Roosevelt Administrations failed to solve the problem. It is not to the discredit of Mr. Roosevelt that after seven years of the New Deal there were still millions of unemployed. The necessity of fashioning remedies from materials supplied by an unworkable economic system made it inevitable that those remedies would not reach the roots of the disease but would prove to be mere palliatives bringing a certain amount of relief to the fever-racked patient.

It is to the credit of Mr. Roosevelt that, unlike Mr. Hoover, he had the courage and the social conscience to use the powers of government to apply palliatives. If he was unable to get at the roots of the disease, he was unwilling to abandon the patient to the increasingly agonizing torments of his misery. He kept the patient alive, he took the sharper edges from his pain. Speaking without metaphor, as a result of his palliatives fewer people were hungry, fewer people were without hope, fewer people lived under the shadow of fear, fewer people were embittered.

It is possible, but immaterial, that Mr. Roosevelt and his advisers were under the illusion that the measures which they sponsored, with varying degrees of success, attacked the roots of the disease. The point is that so long as our society insists upon attacking the economic problem without frankly abandoning the basic premise of the capitalistic system and philosophy no real solution is possible.

Today there is general agreement that the solution of the economic problem demands an economy of full production. The experiences of the war have revealed in startling fashion the productive capacities of this country. Yet it is not many years since reputable economists dismissed as utopian the idea of a society in which no family was forced to live on the margin or below the margin of subsistence. They argued that an equal division of the total wealth of the country would simply depress everybody to the subsistence level. There just was not enough wealth to go around. Even on the face of it this contention was unworthy of serious consideration. It was in effect a confession of the bankruptcy of the capitalistic system or a denial of the Providence of God. Today we know that it was the former. The fact that in the glamorous boom year of 1929 about 60 per cent of all American families, as shown by the Brookings survey "America's Capacity to Consume," could not live on their incomes, that in that same year 74 per cent of all non-farm families did not have sufficient income to enjoy an adequate diet, that in the recovery years 1935-36 two-thirds of all American families were forced to eke out an existence on incomes below $125 per month, is a damning indictment of an economic system that is insolvent. It is not Providence that is at fault. Our war experience has made it evident that if there is not enough real wealth to go around it is not because of the impossibility of producing sufficient wealth, but because the productive capacities of the nation are not being properly exploited.

When Mr. Roosevelt some years ago affirmed his belief that this was an eighty billion dollar nation many dismissed his statement as visionary nonsense. The last five years have shown that Mr. Roosevelt was far too conservative. We have already proved experimentally that we are a two hundred billion dollar nation and that there is nothing to prevent us from becoming a three hundred billion dollar nation except a muscle-bound economic system.

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It is a favorite dodge of those who cannot deny the failures of capitalism to allege that these are the results of abuses of capitalism, not of the system itself. They argue that all that is needed is to purge capitalism of these abuses while leaving the system itself intact.

This contention cannot be sustained. The "abuses" complained of are natural consequences of the basic premise of capitalist theory the inner logic of which works its way out into an economy of scarcity in an age of abundance. The full productive energies stored up in this nation (and in other nations) cannot be released unless the basic premise of that theory is overturned.

The theory itself, freed of technical jargon, is simple and attractive. It proceeds in these terms: the most powerful drive in man is the drive of self-interest. In economic terms self-interest is roughly synonymous with profit seeking. The more an enterpriser produces (and sells) the more profits he will make. The lower his prices the more he will sell. Consequently the enlightened enterpriser, motivated simply by the desire for profits, will gear his activities to the goal of maximum low price production. Thus there naturally ensues an economy of abundance.

It is upon the basis of this reasoning that the classical theorist, sensitive to criticism, indignantly denies that he defends a system which is rooted in selfishness and that he lacks a social conscience. He argues that the ultimate goal of his economic theories is not simply the acquisition of wealth by a fortunate or shrewd or clever minority, but the maximization of social utility.

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The fatal flaw, however, in his theory *qua* theory is that it makes the maximization of social utility dependent upon and subordinate to the primary end of economic activity which is the making of profits. However much the theorist in his ivory tower may insist that profits are maximized by policies of full production and low prices, the average enterpriser knows altogether too many ways in which he can increase his profits by limiting production and maintaining high prices. The average business man who sees an opportunity to "make a killing" by limiting production will not be influenced by the theories of the economists. In fact it is doubtful if the average business man would ever understand the relationship of low prices and maximum production to profits. The average business man is not endowed with vision and there is a tangible immediacy about the relationship between profits and high prices which appeals to his unimaginative soul.

Neither will the average enterpriser be influenced by economic theories when the fluctuations of the business cycle threaten his immediate profits. One does not need to be a professional analyst to know that the immediate reaction of the producer to a falling market is to cut production. In the "good old days" his first reaction was to cut wages, but the growing strength of trade unions has cut off this way of escape from his social obligations. There is still no way of preventing him from cutting production. This means more men thrown into unemployment, reduced consumer buying power leading to further cuts in production and more unemployment. From there on the dismal steps down the declining road of depression are too familiar to require description. At the end of the road are the idle factories, idle capital, idle farms, idle men and all the haunting spectres of social unrest.

In sum: the theory of capitalism is that if economic processes are geared to production for profit, incidentally and secondarily they will assure the maximization of production for use. The theory does not work for the obvious reason that in the real order the incidental and secondary objective will invariably be sacrificed to the primary objective wherever and whenever the enterpriser perceives or thinks he perceives a conflict between the two. And consequently the working out of the theory leads inevitably to the paradoxical phenomenon of an economy of scarcity in an age of abundance.

There can be no escape so long as we rely upon the profit motive to determine the operation of economic forces. There can only be periods of temporary prosperity when new inventions, new processes, abnormal conditions create the conditions of an expanding economy. We are entering such a period now. After we have solved the special problems of transition to a peace time economy, the long unsatisfied demand for consumers' goods should lead to a period of high production and relatively full employment. But when the demand begins to level off we shall discover that nothing has really changed. All the old familiar land-marks will re-appear. The same grim specters will be seen again in their old haunts.

There is only one escape and that is through a social revolution which will upset the basic premise of capitalism. An economy of production for profit must be supplanted by an economy of production for use.

This does not mean that the profit motive must be eliminated entirely. The Marxist analysis, although sound in much of its criticism of the profit motive, erred in concluding that this motive had to be banished entirely from economic processes. The real solution lies in an economy which does not eliminate the profit motive, but subordinates it to social objectives. In such an economy we shall produce *primarily* for use and *incidentally* for profits. The basic theory is the reverse of the theory of capitalism. The latter says, putting it

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in homely fashion, "If we produce primarily to make money, incidentally we shall achieve maximum production for use." The former says: "If we produce primarily for use, incidentally everyone will make money."

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Our war experience has supplied a striking object lesson of the soundness of such a theory. We could not afford to rely upon the vagaries of the profit motive to produce the implements we needed for the prosecution of our common goal. The profit motive was set aside. A common social objective, the production of the tools of war, supplanted it as the dynamic force behind economic processes. Production for use, in this instance the destructive use of war, became the primary objective of our economy. The result was a stunning revelation of the productive capacities of this nation. And incidentally everyone made money.

If production for profit had not been subordinated to production for use we should never have been able even under the urgency of war to release productive energies in any way comparable to those which have astonished both ourselves and the world. This none can deny.

It will be immediately objected, of course, that the prosperity which both enterprisers and workers enjoyed during these years was artificial and deceptive inasmuch as we have been producing "on the cuff." This is true and the staggering figure of our indebtedness (to ourselves) is there to remind us of the fact. But the reason is equally obvious: we have been producing not for constructive but for destructive purposes. We have been creating not real wealth but instruments of war. We have been turning out not butter but bullets, not houses but barracks, not automobiles but tanks, not washing machines but machine guns.

There is nothing in the nature of things to prevent us from directing those same productive energies into the production of real wealth except a fallacious philosophy which makes production of the things we need dependent upon the whimsical moods of the individual seeking to amass a private fortune or to protect a fortune already acquired. No one has yet refuted Mr. Berle's claim that "we can afford anything for which we have materials, labor and reasonable need."

No mere reforms on the level of economic organization can suffice as long as they leave the profit motive ensconced in its sacrosanct place of pre-eminence. Such reforms are necessary, but they are *not enough*. The full development of trade unions (which themselves cannot be easily reconciled with the theories of classical economics), collective bargaining, labor participation in management, the formation of vocational groups along the lines suggested by *Quadragesimo Anno*, government regulation to prevent abusive practices, social security measures—all these are needed. But as long as they leave untouched the basic premise of capitalism they cannot get at the real root of the problem.

The reason is obvious: none of these reforms of themselves operate to release the productive energies of a nation. In fact, as long as they operate within a framework which accepts the basic premise of capitalism they may easily have the contrary effect.

An economist friend of mine, long time supporter of trade unionism, advocate of vocational groups but extremely fearful of government intervention in the economic order, has lately evinced signs of great unease of mind. He is worried about the apparent failure of the unions to understand the importance to society, and hence to them, of maximum low cost production as the desideratum of economic processes. He is afraid that instead of using their new found strength to insist upon such a policy they will cooperate with management in a policy of restricted production to maintain high prices. Thus, while assuring management of larger profits, they hope to assure workers of high wages.

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He has reason to be uneasy. The danger is real and points up the inadequacy of mere structural reform. As long as the profit motive is accepted as the chief determinant of economic policy, labor unions, labor-management committees, vocational groups are no less likely than the individual enterpriser to succumb to the psychology which sets aside the incidental goal of maximum production for use in favor of the primary goal of immediately evident profits. Because of the mass character of such organizations they can thus succeed even more disastrously than individual enterprisers in creating an economy of scarcity.

It is precisely because of this that Mr. Hayek, the modern knight-errant in quest of the lost eighteenth century, dismisses the corporative society of *Quadragesimo Anno* as something "much worse" than the serfdom of the socialist state which he so greatly fears. Certain enthusiastic Catholic admirers of Mr. Hayek seem to have conveniently overlooked this significant paragraph in his widely read book.

Yet in this point Mr. Hayek is right. Vocational groups operating within a system which is based upon the profit motive are more likely to stifle production than to stimulate it. In such a situation the only offset to the psychology which creates an economy of scarcity to maintain high prices (and high wages) is moral suasion and the educational efforts of economic theorists, not

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very reliable weapons against the pull of utilitarian, even unenlightened utilitarian, interests. On the other hand, labor unions, labor-management committees, and other vocational groups can play a very useful part within an economy organized primarily for production for use. Besides the functions they perform under the present system, they can cooperate in supplying the data upon which production schedules are to be based.

In his much discussed book Mr. Hayek attempted to prove from the history of Nazism that government intervention in the economic order inevitably leads to political serfdom. His thesis is a naive distortion of history. None of the modern dictatorships arose as the dialectical conclusion of an historical process of government intervention. They all resulted from political *coups d'état*. And not the least important element contributing to their successful seizure of power was the failure of the incumbent régimes to intervene energetically to relieve the mounting pressure of economic distress.

Neither is it true that political liberties disappeared under the dictatorial régimes as a consequence of their economic policies. They disappeared before the introduction of the new economic policies for the simple reason that political liberties formed no part of the political philosophy of the dictatorial régimes.

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If there is any merit in Hayek's analysis it lies in the fact that attempts to stimulate the economic life of a country through governmental measures which are simply regulatory and coercive in character are apt to be self-defeating. Unlike positive measures such as the TVA, and the proposed MVA, which release productive energies, such measures are negative in character or, if they are of the pump-priming variety, are artificial devices which may help to keep the economic machine from complete collapse but are incapable of infusing it with vigorous life.

The contrast between the relative ineffectiveness of such measures and the tonic effects of TVA, which subordinates production for profit to production for use, is obvious. It is the difference between artificial stimulants which merely keep the patient alive and blood transfusions which send new life flowing through the veins. The longer the patient is forced to rely upon artificial stimulants the greater becomes his need for them. In the end there is the inevitable collapse.

It is their vague apperception of this fact on the one hand and, on the other hand, their unwillingness to repudiate the basic premise of capitalism which accounts for the timidity, the uncertainty, the half-heartedness, the brave advances followed by ignominious retreats, with which some of those who are most aware of the far-reaching injustices of our traditional system approach the problem. They advance boldly against the strongholds of the *laissez-faire* mentality. Then Mr. Hayek suddenly appears on the parapets and performs his magic. From his erudite hat he produces all the old familiar slogans which in the context of the real world have become but euphemisms, shibboleths which none would disown more quickly than Adam Smith. But they are still impressive, especially to one who suffers from a vague premonition that the measures of superficial reform which he advocates may not really lead to an economy of abundance but simply to an economy of scarcity with ever increasing government regulation. They are idols which have been so long worshipped and by so many that it is easy to forget that they no longer represent an objective reality. They are false idols. But can one be altogether sure? Can one be certain that some dread calamity will not follow the throwing down of the idols?

Doubts assail them, timidity takes hold of them. The tone of confidence disappears from their manifestoes. A note of uncertainty creeps in. The signs of a retreat which may easily become a rout appear. Their formerly sound criticisms become hedged with reservations. They speak with ever increasing respect and, as though to make amends and to win leniency for themselves when their surrender becomes complete, more and more frequently of the sacred symbols of the old order. And "ole debbil" reaction sinks back into the deeply upholstered chair, lights up a fifty cent cigar, and gazes with an air of ineffable satisfaction out the windows of the Club upon the passing parade below.

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The defenders of the old order of things are now saying that our victory in this war is a proof of the superiority of the system of free enterprise. If by free enterprise they mean — and they do — the capitalistic system in which the operative principle is the profit motive, then they could not possibly be farther from the truth. If our victory proves anything it proves just the contrary: that in order to release the tremendous productive energies of this nation it was necessary to abandon that system in favor of an economy in which the pursuit of profit was only incidental to the pursuit of a common social objective.

This experience has laid several ghosts with which the defenders of *laissez-faire* have long terrified the populace. How many have been frightened by the sepulchral voices warning that abandonment of the profit system would mean an end to individual initiative, enterprise, inventive genius, scientific progress! We abandoned the profit system during this war. We put production for

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use in the place of production for profit. Did the ghosts materialize? On the contrary.

The whole history of capitalism cannot show a comparable period of five years in which so much individual initiative, enterprise, inventive genius and scientific progress has been recorded. This is so true that men everywhere are already talking about a new age ushered in by the technical and scientific discoveries which came out of the common effort in this war.

There must be many a dour face in the offices of the AMA at the realization that medical science made more progress during the past five years when thousands of doctors forgot their fees and found their motivation in a common struggle to save American lives than would be possible in generations under the good old system of "rugged individualism" so dear to the Association.

There is hardly a single field of activity which did not experience the release of long dormant forces of initiative, enterprise, imagination, experimentation. It is not necessary to document this statement. The documentation is writ large across the records of the past five years. It is familiar to the entire world. However much one may wish that the achievement had proved beyond the reach of man, the story of the atomic bomb is a remarkable revelation of what men can accomplish when their activities are socially organized around a motivation other than that of individual profit-seeking.

Another ancient ghost laid by the experience of these years is the claim that an economy based upon production for use necessarily means the end of political democracy. Our political liberties remained essentially intact. The few restrictions imposed upon certain of them, such as freedom of speech and of the press, had nothing to do with the organization of our economy. They were imposed by military, not by economic, necessity.

★

There is no reason why a peace time economy of production for use should constitute a threat to our political liberties. There is no reason why we cannot still elect our representatives, hold them accountable for their actions and policies, turn them out of office at will. There are, in fact, many reasons to think that if we are really devoted to political democracy (and only a people who are not, ever lose it), we shall be far more stimulated to active participation in the political life of the country. There will be far less of the political apathy which, except in times of crisis, now characterizes so many of our people and which is responsible for the low standards of political morality which prevail in some of the most important centers of population in the country.

The real threat to our political liberties lies in another direction. It will arise if we lack the courage or the vision to reconstruct our economic order upon a new basis. The old order of things is passing. It may hold out longer in the United States than anywhere else in the world, but eventually it will pass into history. It must, because the faulty foundation upon which it rests is incapable of supporting a sound economy in the modern world. If we fail to accept this fact and refuse to undertake the task of reconstruction, the future will be taken out of our hands. The danger then will be that in the collapse of the old order a party, clear as to its objectives but whose political philosophy places no value upon political democracy, will take command. This is the road to serfdom.

The future lies not with the faint-hearted. It lies not with those who, after having emancipated themselves from the illusions of capitalist apologetics, suddenly succumb to timidity and persuade themselves that the calls for a "reconstruction of the social order," for "a social revolution," can be satisfied by a half-hearted measure of superficial reform here, a little bolstering up there. The revolution and reconstruction will come. They will come peacefully if we are wise, if we have vision, if we have courage. Otherwise, they will come, however long their coming may be delayed, with violence and without freedom.

Rue Sainte Ursule

The Gallic cock utters his golden call
strutting a Jesuit spire against the blue of the great sky
over the hither end of this our domestic quarter our street
certainly the deadest end of a town that has never been
greatly alive.
Not dead with the mutability of departed augustitude
nor with the mortality of the past but that of the eternal
moment
tedious clinical hateful
a wilderness of medical men in a rather small way
exhibiting like dishonorable scars the gilded shingles of
little Saint Lukes
and the genial experimenters in obscure diseases
stomach intestines ulcers liver reins . . .

You pass on
and the heart discovers its own reason at the other end of
our street
under the wild balsam of the ramparts over the river
in a garden facing the small blazing chapel of the Heart
of Mary
innocent with lupin and phlox with marigolds and the tall
tricolored hollyhocks

while a Barbary organ complains in some lost unimaginable alley
"O Canada . . .!"

CUTHBERT WRIGHT.

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In No Confusion

W. J. IGOE

THIS is the second day of the trial of William Joyce who is accused of "adhering to the King's enemies while owing allegiance to the Crown."

The luncheon interval is drawing to an end. The court is filled. We are waiting for proceedings to open. In the public gallery the onlookers bend forward, their eyes move around, they sit up, they relax; they are very quiet. Between two old men, a nurse in army gray and crimson knits placidly, a demure figure from Jane Austen, a restful little lady. Her consorts are in morning dress. Their grooming is gala: they remind the reporter of the late Lord Derby and a thousand Irish publicans. Flowers blossom in their mellow lapels. They are gents. The court room rustles to attention.

Against the dark oak and cream a scarlet figure under a cygnet-gray wig is jogging slowly to his seat. Mr. Justice Tucker halts beneath the embossed sword of justice, pointing above the chair, pointing heavenwards. With curt courtesy he bows. His stolid attendants withdraw. He is very small. They were large enough to suggest their presence might intimidate him were it not for his absolute detachment. This is so striking that the reporter would not be surprised if the little man suddenly practiced levitation and floated with delicate mystical grace through the ceiling. Justice rules here and Mr. Justice Tucker is conscious that he holds her scales. When he seats himself the court rustles again; we, the King's lieges, are sitting down.

Halting in their penetrations the little nurse's needles poise as the prisoner enters the dock. He moves quickly towards the rail, bows modestly and counsel rises. Joyce grips the back of his chair with his elbows. As he draws his chin inward, wrinkles streak up his fresh-complexioned, sharp-featured face. He looks rather like a tidy little seaman, a respectable merchant skipper ashore. The form is good, the demeanor impressively undemonstrative. He wears a blue suit, a shirt lighter in color, and a toning tie. Counsel commences and Joyce cocks his head like an intelligent terrier.

"M'Lud"! The flat Oxford voice spreads itself reluctantly over the court. It quotes the Treason Act of 1543. The judge's clerk reaches for the pertinent volume. Mr. Justice Tucker purses his lips and his face which seems to have been prefabricated from little pink pads is gracefully turned toward the book table. His visage is unlined except where the pads join. He seems asleep or intensively living, way back behind the eyes. The quotation finished he reaches over and his pen reared at right angles moves smoothly over the record. The old men in the gallery look at each other and a juror raises his head towards the ceiling as if it were the sky.

This man has the look of an artisan foreman. An eager look it is, that of a just man who has worked hard at manual labor. Now he is frugally secure, and confident as one who has won faith. His clothes have been worn for some years. He wears a neutral colored tie and a white shirt. His hair, like his garb, has been carefully brushed, but is in need of cutting. With a swift smile his benchmate turns to him, as he nervously adjusts himself. This other looks like a doctor. He focuses attention on counsel.

Like the whole twelve good men and true (including two confidently self-conscious, middle-class, middle-aged ladies) the doctor has dressed for the occasion. His short black jacket, winged collar and striped trousers are those of the professional man. His face is less lined than that of his companion. His fingers meet frequently under his chin. He is diagnosing.

This air of preparation and awareness of a special occasion is general among the jurors. Joyce does not often look at them. Only when the judge rules "that is a matter for the jury" do his glances include the observing dozen.

The voices drone on covering, it seems to the observer, all of history. A fellow Scot turns his head from another press chair and grins with delight as a precedent based on the activities of mutual ancestors after the 1707 Act of Union between Scotland and England is quoted. Counsel continues. There is an exchange between him and the judge who interrupts rather testily.

"It is an elementary principle of British Law, Mr. ....." He halts, and then speaks slowly.

"Sir. I wish to withdraw that remark. I detest people who lecture me on what is 'elementary.' I, least of all, should therefore have employed the expression. I apologize and I withdraw it."

Counsel bows: "M'Lud." The judge continues.

Precedent follows precedent. Carelessly the lazy, drawling English voices weave around the court. As the afternoon advances, precedent and principle intermingle. It is really rather more important that British Law should emerge from this court guiltless, than that Lord Haw Haw should be hanged. Another session comes to a close.

Tomorrow Joyce will be sentenced to death because the court, a jury of his peers, has found him a traitor in time of war. A traitor because while he claimed protection from the Crown and therefore owed it a reciprocal allegiance he adhered to the King's enemies. Against this decision he may appeal as his judge, he who will sentence him, will indicate in his summing-up. Tonight Joyce is guiltless in the eyes of the law. He moves with ease and strength towards the exit.

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Yellow weeds blaze on the green which has penetrated the foundations carpeting the open spaces opposite the Central Criminal Court. There is an irony in these ruins. It was to this place, the gateway to the East End, that Joyce's voice had come with the accompaniment of the Luftwaffe engines in 1940. It seems on this Indian Summer's day, London 1945, that there is a drama in the providence that preserved the Court and St. Paul's Cathedral looming in the champagne sunlight. Making my way towards the red buses which halt on Ludgate Hill I turn into a coffee house. There gazing from a window which frames the gilt lady, holding scales upon the dome of the Old Bailey, is the colleague who covered the trial from the chair of the "Daily Worker." On his table lies a copy of the "Times." He orders a cup of tea.

Communications

WAR MONGERS?

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: By birth, education, and conviction, I am a Protestant. Whatever changes the years have made in my opinion of organized religion and the churches, they have not made me a Catholic. But that doesn't mean that I regard the magazine, *The Protestant,* or its editor, Kenneth Leslie, in a kind of line of Protestant Apostolic succession. I doubt if pro-communism is the test of applied Protestantism, or that Stalin, though he knows it not, is to be numbered among its prophets.

I am therefore tempted to write you a few lines to reassure you that Mr. Leslie's elaborate attack on you in the August-September issue of *The Protestant,* which he liked so much that he repeated it in the same language, although somewhat condensed, in the September issue of *Soviet Russia Today,* does not convince me that you are guilty either of clever war mongering or of an "elfin anti-Semitism" which it is his duty to expose. I, as a Protestant, still admire your courage in supporting the Loyalist Government of Spain and your sincere effort to be temperate and just in commenting on Russian developments. I even think that you might in all fairness have given more consideration to armies of forced laborers in Russia.

The timing of Mr. Leslie's attack suggests that he took his orders or his cue from *Pravda* which also has honored THE COMMONWEAL by its rebukes. Mr. Leslie gives away his case when he says: "The Russians have a very simple and forthright way of looking at international affairs. They are in favor of those who are against Hitler's Germany. This is what THE COMMONWEAL can't understand." Isn't it rather ridiculous to explain Russian demands all over the world simply on a basis of opposition to Hitler's Germany now reduced to the level of an economic slum, and isn't it worse than ridiculous to ignore the fact that not the Russians but Stalin, who makes Russian policy, was the active ally of Hitler in the occupation of Poland in the years when Molotov declared, "Fascism is a matter of taste"?

I think Dr. George Shuster, who once was, but has not been for many years, managing editor of THE COMMONWEAL, made a bad mistake in his early appraisal of Hitler, but long ago he brought forth fruits meet for repentance. He didn't have to wait until Hitler attacked his quasi ally Stalin in 1940.

NORMAN THOMAS.

IN THE TABLET'S DEFENSE

Denver, Colo.

TO the Editors: Your sordid and callous attack on the Brooklyn *Tablet* confirms without doubt your uselessness as a "free" paper. Your attack reveals your complete prostitution to sordid standards of the modern Pharisees. Your heart and head are dead; you cannot, therefore, even understand the most simple meaning of Christ's word LOVE. The *Tablet* is rightfully disturbed over the British elections simply because the people "elected a government with the *idea* that it would work." That *idea* will victimize the people because the idea was a "front," and controlled by the strategy of Stalin's evil radicalism. Attlee, Laski, Stalin, *et al,* are stooges of International Finance and International Jewry riding high as scavengers of frustration, despair and chaos. The true result of the British election is but part fulfillment of A. A. Berle's "Significance of a Jewish State," coming out of Nimrod's Babylon.

If you must dabble in international affairs, you should temper your knowledge to realities; then you will have greater respect for true facts. Otherwise you will always remain a transmission belt for the evil forces working against true Christianity. Out here we see and feel better than you can. Our space is wider—so is our vision.

JAMES P. FAIRCHILD.

THE RETURNING SOLDIERS

Bethany, Pa.

TO the Editors:—Paulding has hit the nail on the head. But I am afraid "it is way beyond the average American," to quote an American Sergeant friend of mine. I knew him before the war, a twenty-four-year-old boy from a small town. A few weeks ago I saw in the local paper that he was back, and talking about Europe at Grange meetings. He dropped in to see me and talked for two straight hours, mostly to himself. He said many things along the line of prejudices mentioned by Paulding. But again he said a few things which proved either that his sensibility had been struck or that his possibilities of thinking had been awakened. This was about France and could be called grandly "Contribution to the Understanding of French People." "It is next to impossible," he said, "for the average fellow to understand French people. They are too far away from us. We are extremely superficial. Our feelings are skin deep, no matter what we imagine. It is all hooey about the superficiality of the French. They are the deep ones. We cannot even start to have any idea how deep they are. So we are always talking to each other at different levels. I have tried to explain it to the fellows in the Army, and here now, at the Granges. Sometimes I think they get it. But

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they really never do. Because, to the average American, everything boils down to plumbing. If the plumbing is good, it's a grand country. If not, no use for the people. Also, the French are dignified. They don't seem to enthuse over the American suggestions. They don't flatter the Americans. The American does not understand. It is really a compliment to be treated like an adult. But the average American thrives on flattery."

After a while he disclosed that he had left a piece of his heart in every French town he had stayed in. Perhaps he was bragging. There was Cecile, Jeannette, Suzanne, Yvonne, etc. But none of them could measure up to Marie, the Norman girl. First, of course, his good fortune had been to go on a side road and to find a farm and a wonderful cheese and some *maitre cidre* and fiery *Calvados*. But later he had come back because of Marie. He said in French—he had learned a little of it: *"C'est formidable.* Two things I found in France, and did not know they could exist. Never found them anywhere else: a woman *'vraiment amoureuse.'* In love with your whole self, your own *person. That's the word.* Never thought of it until I met Marie. But, boy! It makes a guy feel like a million dollars. And the other thing is: an absolutely sincere woman. ["The French supremely enamored of truth," Paulding?] I don't mean a woman who does not fib or tell lies. I mean a woman who does not kid herself. Only French women are like that; uncompromisingly square with themselves. It just bowls you over. Because, of course, not only you don't expect it of women, but Americans cannot live like that. Still, it is the only way we want to live."

Later I said: "What about Marie? Did you make any promise?" He did not answer. "You know," I said, "if you did, she will wait for you." "I know," he said. "But what can I do? I was born and raised in this country. What else is there for me to do except to make money and *improve the plumbing."* And though there was disappointment in his voice, there was also relief. Relief at not being compelled to live up to the French pitch. He had escaped what he yearned for. Will Marie ever understand?

CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP.

MONSIGNOR RYAN

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: May I make the following observations on one statement that appeared in your editorial tribute to the late, lamented Monsignor Ryan in the issue of September 28th? The statement is as follows: "He manifested unshaken conviction that his own analysis of a problem was the only analysis possible." To persons familiar with Monsignor Ryan's writings and methods that is indeed an amazing statement. The exact opposite would seem to me to be substantially true, namely, his conviction that in the vast majority of problems with which he dealt neither his nor anybody else's was the only possible analysis.

In his work "Social Reconstruction," published in 1920, in a paragraph in which industrial questions were being considered the following statement is to be found: "So often one has to be content with a qualified generalization 'probably things are so and so,' 'it seems that things are so and so.' We cannot honestly make a more positive statement. However, this much is certain: if we try to get hold of all the facts we shall be wrong less often than if we did not do so, and the more facts we get as a basis of judgment the more likely we are to be approximately right when we do venture upon general statements."

The following quotation is from "Questions of the Day," published in 1931, and is a clear indication of Monsignor Ryan's own attitude in these matters. "Probably the writer merely intends to say that in some fields of thought there is no authority nor any compelling array of evidence to guarantee certainty, that in them men can possess only opinions and greater or less degrees of probbility. This statement is true to a greater or less extent of politics, economics, sociology, philosophy, history and in a large portion of the territory occupied by the physical sciences." It is evident that a great deal of Monsignor Ryan's work lay in these fields in which he rightly maintains one can have only relative certainty.

Finally it can be said that from this position this distinguished Catholic scholar never deviated even in his later years. No small amount of the adverse criticism to which he was subjected by some of his co-religionists was due to his unwillingness to claim for his arguments greater cogency than they possessed. In the fall of 1943 he lectured at the New School for Social Research in New York City on Catholic Moral Teaching and the War. In the discussion period that followed the lecture the question was asked why the Church had not taken a more decided stand in the Second World War. Monsignor Ryan made an effective presentation of the reasons why the Holy See had acted as it did and stressed the fact that the primary mission of the Church is to preach the Gospel and administer the sacraments to men of all nations. At the close one distinguished non-Catholic scholar, after paying tribute to Monsignor Ryan's scholarly attainments and crusading spirit in the cause of social justice, declared that he was not convinced that neutrality was the policy that should have been followed by religion in general in the war between the Axis and the Allied Nations. A Catholic professor, who was present at the lecture, was disturbed by this turn of events. On the basis of this non-Catholic's unwillingness to be convinced by the arguments adduced for the neutrality of the Church, this professor maintained privately and quite unreasonably that the Catholic exposition had been defective. The lecturer that evening, however, never maintained that his arguments were so cogent that they had to be accepted and made precisely that remark when discussing the matter with me a short time later.

In conclusion you will permit me to say that I am fully aware that the editors of THE COMMONWEAL are familiar with the writings and methods of this valiant priest who has so lately gone to his reward. Furthermore, without your explicit statement I would know in what high esteem you held him. For these reasons, therefore, I have no hesitancy in forwarding you this letter.

The Reverend E. HAROLD SMITH.

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THE JAPANESE

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: I will go even further than Dom Thaddeus Yang, O.S.B. (THE COMMONWEAL, Sept. 28, 1945) and claim that anything anybody says about the relations of the peoples of the Far East is bound to be misleading, and risks being dangerous to him who says it. The subject is so vastly important, however, that he is equally bound to take the risk, but everyone who treats it in any way must be as clear about it as it is possible for him to be, for he so truly implies: it deals with the future of the vast majority of the human race and affects every member of it. Peoples who dislike—not to say hate—each other as fiercely as the Chinese and Japanese (or Koreans and Japanese—or even at times Koreans and Chinese) so often have at stages of their long common history to risk a certain impulsiveness whenever anyone else, alien to them, comes into their ancient family feud. That fact is evidence of their "one-ness." When I used the words "they are all one people," what I had in mind was the analogy which does exist between the peoples of Western Europe as "one," and the peoples of Eastern Asia as "one." I think it is true that the World War in its European aspect was a gigantic civil war because all of us who are Western Europeans, or derived from Western Europe, come from the same racial and Christian roots. No matter how we differ, we all could understand each other if we chose to. We, as what once was Christendom, are all formed in the same mold. Analogically, all Eastern Asiatic peoples were formed in the same mold of the tremendous ancient culture and civilization of China. There is quite positively and definitely a "one-ness" there, just as there is a "one-ness" in all that flowed out of Greece, to Rome, to upper Europe, through and into Christendom. Analogically, again: world war in its Eastern Asiatic phase is also a gigantic civil war in that sense. World War between Western Europe and Eastern Asia, or conversely, world peace, is devoid of the fundamental basis of common understanding. Neither socially nor religiously is there any common ground of history and tradition between Western Europe and Eastern Asia. The problems set up are thus far more complex and dangerous than are those of Asia as a whole or Europe (America, Australia, etc.) as a whole. That is what I have been trying to say ever since I was given this very task in 1896 . . . a very long time ago!

As a Christian Catholic priest and Benedictine monk of the oldest European Christian religious Order, as a member of the greatest and oldest of Asia's cultures, and as a modern Chinese whose age is fairly exploding into the future of the world, Dom Yang may well and rightly claim the imperative need for understanding between our peoples . . . yet, there are certainly several million Americans who have no conception of the Chinese mind, and, equally, many tens of millions of Chinese who have no knowledge of us, and among them very many who do not like what they do know of us. So, while I respect Dom Yang's "protest as a Chinese" against my words he quotes, I still hold to what I said.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

The Stage & Screen

The Ryan Girl

AS THIS is extinct star-stuff, one does not know whether to run a review under the play's title, or June Havoc's neon name. But since Miss Havoc is, by virtue of past performance, far and away more secure than her vehicle, I think it unfair to deliver her all the blame. It is not that Edmund Goulding's "drama" is an out-and-out lemon. A fancier of fair women, having extracted a number of profitable discoveries out of Hollywood, the author discloses the kind of technical astuteness allied to a repetition of idea which one commonly associates with the West Coast belatedly returned. His piece, a melodrama, concerns a medium gal, late late of the (original) follies, who, meeting her abandoned, air-force-hero son for the first time since his birth, finds herself constrained to do in his small-racket sire because of the wicked plans harbored by the latter. The first act comprises introduction; the second, exposition; and the third, the foreseen killing, very neatly contrived. And all studded by some of the strangest acting (in the persons of Doris Dalton and Curtis Cooksey) I have seen. But the evening's phenomenon (and it develops one) is very definitely superimposed upon its interior working. And since we will come upon this same appearance again in the week's procession, I do think it worth some examination. From first to last, I think Mr. Goulding's effort can only be called (I'm coining) a *direction,* not a play, not a production. Whatever material is there, and its actors, is *directed,* staged, out of any reality whatsoever. In the beginning, I hesitated, in a sort of pre-description of the affair, between wanting to call it a walking illustration of an early true-story "Ididit" and a talking-silent-movie; and profoundly wished to trace its origin to Hollywood from way back. But while this is certainly possible, I have seen the same effects too often presented by purely theater men to borrow prejudice. Now, I think a definition is in order and want to hazard one. When you see a performance filled with long moved silences; when the stage floor is unmotivatedly crossed, re-crossed, interestingly composed before lines are delivered; when (in Shakespeare and period stuff) supers rustle, meet, group and hissingly *ad lib* while the static principals bellow you into the aisles delivering words: this is a *direction,* not a play. There is an analogy: post-war gadget advertising promotes a sheet plastic which, it is sworn, is all but air; air-colored, invisible, yet tough and pliable. Well, when you sit, ticketed, confronted by a suspicion of this plastic, of an unseen obstruction boxing the proscenium arch; when there rears no area of communication (participation) between you and the players; what you are witnessing is a *direction,* not a play. Mr. Goulding (author-director) offers a *direction.* Stet.

The results of all this in the performance of Miss Havoc are only as mildly interesting as might be guessed. Physically startling, she has (as has been previously

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noted here) enough experience to be instructed in anything and do a job. But I don't think any amount of promotion can increase personality. In last year's "Rain" (singing-playing) she came out sure in the midst of an enormous expensive flop, and I think perhaps some novel kind of adjusted musical may be her field. For straight work, her voice, springing from neither ribs, ears, shoes nor judgment (or wherever is the actor's seat of conviction) is, however clear and projected, false. In any case, she is, in more ways than one, here overworked. For Edmund Lowe's typical old-hat gangster, Una O'Connor's telephone-and-question-answering Maid: respects. And for Raymond Sovey's delicately realized floosey set: the evening's cheers. (*At the Plymouth.*)

You Touched Me

WITH the year's million-maker still honestly building him credit in Forty-eighth Street, it is simple to conjecture that Tennessee Williams's immediate second would have to be better than good, which it is not. The current Guthrie McClintic offering appears to be early lumber, built in combination with Donald Windham, and it is something of a mystery (or isn't it?) why the playwright allowed its production. Somehow or other based on a D. H. Lawrence short story describing an aged (British cliché) Sea Captain frustrated by an aging (Tenneseee cliché) Spinster Sister, and volubly driven to mating his young daughter with an orphan he has befriended in the interests of introducing some LIFE, LIFE! into his especial small English plot, I can only say that the writing seemed to me foolish indeed and the production vastly overweighted by specious direction (see above) and a most busy architectural set by Motley. There is probably a brilliant Chestertonian conclusion pinning all male playwrights for the women they depict, but I don't know what it is. My only proved finding concerning Mr. Williams on this score will be that he does seem to be intensely interested in women, and that his choice appears, so far, to light on the Somebody's-American-Mother arrangement. Certainly it is something of a strain to find in this so-called rural English scene a woman so idiomatically, melodramatically, repetitiously interstate as the important Aunt develops. And I don't honestly think Catherine Willard's shifting performance can be traced to misconstructions other than the script's. Edmund Gwenn is, as expected, adept and adorable as the lusty, overt (D. H. Lawrence overt) Captain, and the fact that these two resolve into farce at the end of what should have been simply a love-story will give you some idea of the stylistic pudding. But by far the sharpest failure of the evening will be, I feel, Montgomery Clift's unshining descent into a poor job as the family's Charity Boy. One appreciates his seriousness as an actor in choosing to step from the kind of dark, silent, neurotic hero he has graced in the past into a part at once more open and prolonged; but unfortunately his present playing of it comes across as little more than an inarticulate mutter. Long speeches he cannot handle at all, and the Alfred Lunt mannerism of speech has returned with a vengeance. The performance leads one to suspect that the extraor-

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dinary intensity he has displayed in the past has been perhaps more due to a lack of lines than to any sustained projection. At all events, it is surprising how much work this interpretation shows him to need.

Marianne Stewart's Daughter of the House seemed to me perfectly plain, and Norah Howard's Cockney Maid fine. However, I think neither she nor Mr. Gwenn is able to straighten Mr. Williams's present mix-drix. (*At the Booth.*)

Deep Are The Roots

MY conviction is that no amount of fancy phrasing (my own, of course), or analysis, can in any way augment the excellence of this Kermit Bloomgarden-George Heller production. In checking down my program for immediate penciled quibbles, I can find not one, and it is something for this column to be able to follow the simple direct listing with the idea of mentioning as many names as gratefully as possible. The Arnaud d'Usseau-James Gow play attacks our largest national problem and moreover is beautifully cast and directed with assurance by Elia Kazan. The piece gives us a decorated Negro Officer returning to his down-South home town and his white folks, one of whom is the so-called liberal elder daughter of the house; another, her younger sister, who falls quite artlessly in love with the young man, and in the subsequent turmoil demands to marry him. The boy's chief idea is the teaching of his people and his chief enemy is the master of the house, a retired US Senator who is murderously against any suspicions of racial equality whatsoever. The story plays back and forth between these forces, including a devised theft framed by the Senator, and ends on a note of hope, although only a note, and one placed far in the future. In spite of a structural weakness in the third act (there are a number of unmotivated exits and too much talk), and in spite of some overbalance on the part of the old man (one wishes he had not to be precisely such an old-time heel, although I believe him to be historically accurate) the business moves rapidly and smoothly between curtains, presenting characters in which it is more than possible to believe: persons, men and women of both races. Entirely courageous, it deals in no cheap or easy shock; is adult, enlightened, moving, thrilling and most neatly fitted. A play: an experience.

And performances are in line. In the crux part, the young girl, it is not possible to magnify Barbara Bel Geddes's job. With the whole work hanging on her taste and virtuosity, she offers the exact amount of breeding, innocence and simplicity, a rare combination. Add to this the fact that she knows how to move, has an appropriate voice and an enchanting appearance, and you have the kind of breathtaking *tour* not seen hereabouts, I should imagine, since the earliest Helen Hayes. Carol Goodner is no less skilful, although more assorted in the older part, and Lloyd Gough steadily builds in the *rôle* of her aware Northern fiancé. I thought Gordon Heath both dignified and powerful as the Soldier; Evelyn Ellis almost best as his Mother, in an evening of "bests"; and Helen Martin as fine as usual as an important Maid. Charles Waldron's Senator and Harold Vermilyea's Small Politician expertly complete the list. Howard Bay's dramatic single setting aptly proves Mr. Kazan's sureness as director as, certainly, do all the performances of all his players. Here, then, is theater, for once in a way. (*At the Fulton.*)

KAPPO PHELAN.

Fairy Tales

THE MOVIE version of Noel Coward's *"Blithe Spirit"* is being advertised with such come-ons as "his naughtiest comedy," "in Blushing Technicolor." Of course Mr. Coward can't be blamed for the advertisements — but the phrases are typical of the film, which, like the play, is really a musical revue skit stretched out to 96 minutes. Its blushing naughtiness is just the thing for the tired business man, but its emptiness is bound to impress anyone who expects a movie to have more than a single situation worked to death. The situation in itself is amusing enough: Charles Condomine, a writer of mystery thrillers, wants to learn some of the tricks of spiritualism, so he invites a local medium in for a séance. Nothing much seems to come of it except entertainment for the novelist, his wife Ruth and a couple of guests. But after the medium leaves it becomes apparent that something did happen: the ghost of Charles's first wife, Elvira, a very theatrical blonde babe, blows in; and, for one dead these seven years, she seems to have lost none of her sex appeal. Only Charles and we see and hear Elvira — much to the annoyance of Ruth who naturally is left out of things while the other two go in for a lot of fast banter. The pattern gets pretty tiresome, with Charles and Elvira tossing risqué cracks and Ruth, who hears only half of the conversation, thinking his taunts are directed at her. There is very little action accompanying all this talk; even the automobile accident, planned by Elvira to make a fellow spirit out of Charles but killing Ruth by mistake, happens off screen.

The fine cast, gathered by Coward who produced the film in England, was directed by David Lean; and the performances are amazingly good considering that the players had to substitute smart talk for depth: Rex Harrison as the harassed novelist, Constance Cummings as his second wife who doesn't get the joke at all, Kay Hammond as Elvira whose makeup and costume give the film's stunning technicolor its reason for being and whose unusual voice and wicked smirk fit the characterization perfectly. However it is Margaret Rutherford, as the medium, who wins most laughs. Her portrayal, though entirely different from Mildred Natwick's interpretation of the rôle on the New York stage, is a wonderful study in caricature. Her Madame Arcati is about as unspiritual as any hungry, Martini drinking, cliché talking, bustling bundle of robustness could be.

Another new film is very dull. *"Her Highness and the Bellboy"* aims to be a once-upon-a-time in a modern setting. It tells a story about a lovely, lonely princess (Hedy Lamarr) who comes to New York to look up a former boyfriend (Warner Anderson). Through a misunderstanding at her hotel, where the princess and a bellboy (Robert Walker) have become friendly, the bellboy

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thinks she is in love with him; and in the climax the bellboy explains to her with great dignity why he cannot go with her to her kingdom as her husband. This simple plot could have been made into a brilliant satirical movie if it had been written and directed by someone like Preston Sturges. But it is now so cluttered with sentiment and out-moded ideas taken seriously that it falls flat. Furthermore, Richard Thorpe's direction moves so slowly that the whole long piece seems twice as long as it is. Along with the princess theme, which involves a retinue played by Agnes Moorehead, Carl Esmond, etc., and a lot of *noblesse oblige* stuff, there is a great deal about a crippled girl (June Allyson) who lacks the will to walk and who is very much in love with the bellboy. She lies in bed painting dolls and waiting for the bellboy and his doltish friend (Rags Ragland) to entertain her. The bellboy does this by taking the invalid on imaginary trips around New York and by reading fairy stories with morals about fear that makes bad things big and courage that makes them small. Ragland tries to entertain the girl by standing on his head. When he says dejectedly, "I guess I ain't funny," he opens himself up to a great big "No, you ain't," from the audience. The picture's one brightness is Robert Walker's performance. Whether this good actor is just reading a story, explaining American slang to the princess, or touchingly refusing her offer of marriage (which she never made, of course) he holds your attention with his artistry. Alas, however, neither the picture nor the princess are worthy of the bellboy.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

More Books of the Week

The Unquiet Grave. Palinurus (Cyril Connolly) Harper. $2.50.

SOME books are timely, others timeless; some few, not necessarily the best, are both: they catch and transfix the present moment, yet are not washed away with it, do not date. Examples of the timely, in this century, would be Norman Douglas's "South Wind," Freud's "Future of an Illusion," Spengler's "Decline of the West" and Huxley's "Grey Eminence," Timely too, such plays as "A Doll's House," "The Cherry Orchard" and "The Importance of Being Earnest." Timeless books are obvious. Those books that combine both qualities are rarer and harder to define: Donne's sermons? "Madame Bovary"? "Finnegan's Wake"? Mr. Connolly's new book, which appeared a year or so ago in England in a very limited edition, and was at once snapped up, sold out, is one of these equivocal books. It may be a masterpiece. It is certainly a classic.

Yet, like its author, it is in many ways most unprepossessing. This fat, lazy, cowardly, sensual, petulant, middle-aged man, who casts himself delicately, cynically, upon the carpet of our consciousness, is a sorry fellow. Only his absolute honesty, to borrow a Buchmanite term, excuses his exhibitionism. Few writers, except Augustine and Rousseau and Marie Baskirtsheff, have had the courage to see themselves. *Pace* Robert Burns, it is both easier and pleasanter to "see ourselves as 'ithers see us." For even our greatest enemies cannot suspect what we *know*—the worst. Not the few great firefly-sized sins, but the cloud of gnat ones, of cockroach ones—those the button-molder held against Peer Gynt, and that we all collect. The small cowardices, the meaneyboots vindictiveness; the half-hearted fiddlings of mind no less than of flesh; the everlasting side-stepping from reality; the rust of self-pity; the lie-to-myself, and the whine; the I-don't-look-so-bad-now-I've-got-my-make-up-on. And because of the horrifying clarity of his direct, undistorted, unhumbugging vision of himself, Mr. Connolly will get less of a shock on the Judgment Day than most of us. "We pay for vice by the knowledge that we are wicked; we pay for pleasure," he writes, "when we find out too late that we are nothing; its accounts are kept in small change; but the total is as large."

There is almost as much in this book of quotation as of writing. Chunks of his cronies, Pascal, Chamfort, T. S. Eliot, Sainte-Beuve, are interspersed with cyrilliana. He throws in his excerpts from his library without assimilating or digesting or regurgitating them. Précis and paraphrase he despises; it is only fair to add that his honesty also forbids him to plagiarize. These his preferences strip him still more bare, for if a man but disclose his books—what he reads and what he keeps—he can hide his friends all he wants, it will do him no good: his deeps are discovered as surely as his cavities by the dentist's torch.

Mr. Connolly chooses twelve books. All these master works he admires are, from Horace to Byron, "earthbound." They show "love of life and nature; lack of belief in the idea of progress, interest in, mingled with contempt for, humanity." He would like to have written "Les fleurs du mal" or the "Saison en enfer" without being Rimbaud or Baudelaire, that is, without their mental sufffering, and without being diseased and poor. His pseudonym, Palinurus, is less a cloak than an explanation: it serves to amplify and idealize more than to conceal. Palinurus, the pilot of Aeneas, fell overboard, dragging with him the tiller, rudder, and a section of poop. As it was after Aeneas's desertion of Dido, Mr. Connolly doubts the explanation given—that Palinurus fell by accident, in deep sleep, to satisfy Neptune's need for a victim—since he has promised to spare Aeneas at Venus's request. Palinurus is Virgil's own death-wish, think some, and Mr. Connolly amongst them: a wish to suicide that is

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also a wish to murder. Palinurus reached the Lucanian shore alive, but was immediately set upon and murdered. His ghost, unburied, would not rest until he was promised a tomb and a temple.

Of "The Unquiet Grave" its author explains it is "the doubts and reflections of a year, a word-cycle in three or four rhythms: art, love, nature and religion, an experiment in self-dismantling, a search for the obstruction which is blocking the flow from the well." And the dedication is "a never writer to an ever reader."

At the beginning, in the fall, Palinurus is a Taoist; a twelve-month later, a Gnostic: "this is the time of year when religions are interested in me." In the first pages, he is agin' the idea of original sin! "what rubbish! the Expulsion from Eden is an act of vindictive womanish spite; the fall of man is in reality the Fall of God." A year later, he is all for it! "what distinguishes true civilizations from their mass-fabricated substitutes except that tap-root to the Unconscious, the sense of Original Sin?" He is very petty about his vestigial Christianity, pushing it away as a spoilt child pushes Nanny who has come at bedtime to give him his bath.

He glories in a tremendous womb-fixation (he likes the Gnostic theory that Adam in the Garden of Eden was the babe in the womb fed by four rivers—arteries from the navel—and expelled by his mother into the world at the Fall): "if we apply depth psychology to our own lives we see how enslaved we remain to the womb and the mother. Womb of Mother Church, of Europe, mother of continents, of horseshoe harbors and valleys, of the lap of earth, of the bed, the arm-chair and the bath—all our lives seeking a womb with a view . . . is it that all men would revenge themselves for their betrayal by their mothers and of their mothers, hitting out blindly to efface the memory of the triple expulsion—from the sovereignty of the womb, from the sanctuary of the breast, from the intoxication of the bed and the lap?" Yet it is rather the sea, than the earth that holds him. In everything he writes, as in a shell held to the ear, there is the sound and the sighing of the sea. Even his earth-animals—savage and mournful (ferrets and lemurs are his favorites), even his vegetable loves (mostly those both scented and edible; quinces and nectarines for example) are less nostalgically recurrent than the sea creatures—crabs, lobsters, sea-anenomes, starfish.

Not only his honesty, but his veracity mark him out as no mere writer of "Trivia." "Optimism and self-pity are the positive and negative poles of modern cowardice." "Those who are consumed with curiosity about other people but who do not love them should write maxims, for no one can become a novelist who does not love his fellow-men. Being contaminated with oriental philosophy, I cannot take people seriously. They all seem replaceable except for the few who carry away sections of our own selves which cannot be replaced." "Unreality is what keeps us from ourselves, and most pleasures are unreal." "Our memories are card-indexes consulted and then put back in disorder by authorities whom we do not control." "Imprisoned in every fat man is a thin one signaling wildly to be let out."

But it is when writing of writers, and of writing, that he is at his surest. Those who read his "Enemies of Promise" know how great a critic he is; those who have read the monthly editorials in *Horizon*, throughout the war, know how subtle his analysis of the state of literature; of the mind that is in artists. In "The Unquiet Grave" there are distillations one longs for enlarged to man-sized drinks. He is wonderfully sane and civilized about sex, and surprisingly—in view of his dislike of the Gospels—comes out for "Christian marriage" as the only way of preventing the suffering that two people can otherwise inflict unchecked upon each other.

But from this book it is clear why "the name of Palinurus is becoming an archetype of frustration." Compare the following passages: "what makes great writers of the past most vivid to us is the extent of their misery; the despair of Pascal, the bitterness of La Rochefoucauld, the ennui of Flaubert, the *noia* of Leopardi, the spleen of Baudelaire—none but the truths which have been extracted under mental torture appeal to us. We live in such a desperate age that any happiness which we possess must be hidden like a deformity, for we know that, although all our nature revolts, we can create only through what we suffer." And: "For me success in life means survival. I believe that a ripe old age is nature's reward to those who have grasped her secret. I do not wish to die young or mad. Yet, sometimes, at night, I get a feeling of claustrophobia, of being smothered by my own personality . . . it is like being pinned underneath the hull of a capsized boat." It is all quite all right, and Palinurus *is* on the side of the angels, only, how he does dislike it: "The function of the writer is to produce a masterpiece," he warns us, and "no other task is of any consequence. Writers engrossed in any literary activity which is not their attempt at a masterpiece are their own dupes." He is cowardly and it must be horrible to mind being hurt so much; he waddles along, pretending to be a whey-faced bureaucrat, he hates suffering as much as Kierkegaard, yet nothing will save him from it; he will never be Balthasar Gracian, with his "Art of Worldly Wisdom," for he is quite rightly sure that "nothing can be accomplished without fanaticism, and without serenity nothing can be enjoyed."

ANNE FREMANTLE.

Indian Paul. John Moore. Harcourt. $2.00.

THIS isn't so much the story of Paul, the Indian who bashed his mother's head in, as it is a report on the reactions and responses of the people in a resort town in northern Michigan. The events occur during the few days following Labor Day when that dead, end-of-summer aspect hits the community after the vacationists have departed leaving the townsfolk eager to get control again. This resentment against outside influence is hardly an excuse for their misuse of justice.

Indian Paul makes no resistance when he is put in jail. "He don't even give a damn," says one of his captors. Again and again the townsfolk, gathered at the tavern, discuss Paul's unexplained but confessed killing. "Nothing like a murder to get a man thirsty." Then, when this indignant, lower middle class group are aroused to a high frenzy, they march on the unguarded jail—an angry, cowardly crowd with the inevitable leader who is slightly bolder, slightly drunker than the rest. "It's us who've got to preserve the name of our town." Before they go through with their intentions, the town doctor arrives, berates them severely, shames them away from the lynching. On the next day, when the sobered, contrite members of last night's mob hardly have the courage to look each other in the eyes, four youngsters abduct Paul to a cabin in the woods to carry out their elders' ideas of justice. Their cold blooded, half-baked plans go hay-

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wire; but unfortunately the doctor does not arrive in time to save Paul.

The author of "Indian Paul" has nothing new to say about the crime of lynching; what is unusual about his book is its flat, objective style. John Moore never screams or even editorializes; his story has none of the suspense of "The Ox-Bow Incident"; and for these reasons, as a work of art "Indian Paul" doesn't quite come off. Such a tale of violence needs more than the well written, photographically accurate reporting that Moore gives it. Sinclair Lewis raises more of a temperature in describing the monotony of Main Street than John Moore does in relating the sordid events that accompany the mob psychology of lynching. Furthermore, "Indian Paul" should have been shorter or longer: a tight short story, with extraneous details omitted, about the lynching perpetrated by the boys who rushed in where their elders feared to go; or the present 159 pages expanded to a full-length novel about the two lynchings, complete with such details, now omitted by Moore, as the story behind Paul's murdering his mother, the background and home lives of the townsfolk, a development of the theme concerning the Whites' contempt for the Indians, and perhaps some study of why the county and state did not take charge more effectively. This is John Moore's first novel; he writes well and has feeling for people and locale. I am certain we shall hear from him again; but I wish in this case, with his important subject matter, he had written a book that would be read far and wide.

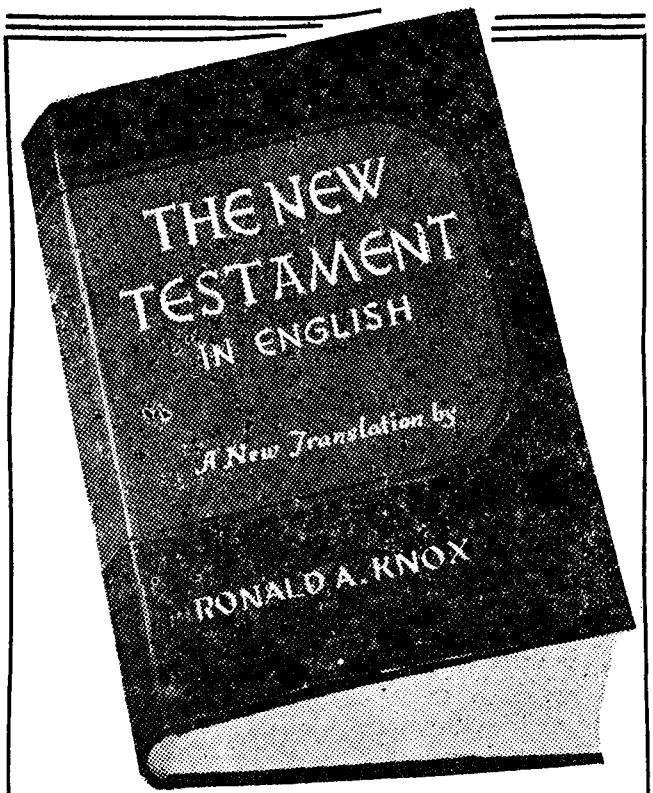
PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Music of Latin America. Nicolas Slonimsky. Crowell. $3.50.

THIS is probably the definitive work of its kind, a detailed and scholarly study of Latin American music, incorporating an account of its origins, its instruments ancient and modern, and its composers living and dead. Decidedly, a reference book which every library should have; and written with some sprightliness by the Russian-American Mr. Slonimsky, who enjoyed various entertaining experiences while visiting, lecturing and gathering material in all the Latin-American republics. Yet it would be untrue to say that it is a very engrossing book, even for the reader predisposed to enjoy books about music.

Possibly this is because the bulk of the work deals—as, indeed, a study of any kind of American music might—with musical figures who could not conceivably be accounted great. Composer after composer, as analyzed by Mr. Slonimsky, turns out to be a pale imitator of Puccini or earlier Italian melodists, of Tchaikovsky, of Stravinsky, and above all of Debussy and Ravel. And farther down the scale, one gleans the information that there are (and were) just four composers in Honduras, the most notable of whom wrote military marches "in his lucid moments," i.e. when not intoxicated.

A tabulation by Mr. Slonimsky, breaking down his 290 composers as to the number per thousand people and per thousand square miles in each country, confirms impressions as to the most musically interesting nations. Argentina, Brazil and Mexico have the most composers and, as the author puts it, the highest "density." It is not surprising that the best-known composers of South and Central America are Argentina's Castro brothers and Jacobo Ficher (actually Russian-born), Brazil's Oscar Fernandez, Camargo Guarnieri, Francisco Mignone and



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Heitor Villa-Lobos, and Mexico's Julian Carillo, Carlos Chavez, Candelario Huizar, Blas Galindo and Silvestre Revueltas. The flamboyant Villa-Lobos, who conducted in this country not long ago, Carillo who writes in sixteenth and other fractional tones, the late, ill-starred Revueltas—these emerge as figures of the first rank, of whose music one would like to hear a great deal more than is currently possible, under North American concert hall conditions.

Certainly the musical life to the south of us possesses a vitality and exuberance which we might well envy. Concerts make front-page news, as Mr. Slonimsky shows—with conservatories on every block, and composers and orchestras subsidized liberally by government, and in almost every country a real musical tradition, whether it descends from the Indians, Negroes, Spaniards, or all three, or from the classical Masses of the Church, or from Italian opera which took root so much sooner than in the north. Where else would the leading musician of the land be thrown into jail, as he was in Costa Rica in 1853, and be told he would not be released until he composed a national anthem? CARL BALLIETT, JR.

The Farmer's Last Frontier. Fred A. Shannon. Farrar. $5.00.

THE latest volume of an "Economic History of the United States" tells in well-documented fashion of the main developments in American agriculture from 1860-1897. One of the leading elements in this complicated story was the disposal of our public lands when the Great West opened up. Try as they might, legislators—when they did make the effort—proved unequal to the task of preventing these new lands, which were intended for individuals with little capital, from falling into the hands of ruthless speculators.

The Egg and I. Betty MacDonald. Lippincott. $2.75.

CHICKEN raising is not the daintiest business going. And when it means suddenly taking over an old chicken ranch in the Olympic Mountains in the Far West it is an experience. The author was only 18 when she married and started this new life in a wilderness where the neighbors were hillbillies whose talk was so ripe that it would be barred from our cheapest comic strips. That Betty surmounted the rigors of a work-all-day existence which began regularly at four in the morning is a tribute to her will power as well as to her youthful resilience. She is rather wide-eyed but not too irritatingly "humorous" about it all. A good antidote for back-to-the-land romancing.

American Labor Unions. Florence Peterson. Harper. $3.00.

THIS comprehensive handbook is written in as popular a style as a serious discussion of the subject would allow; it is highly informative. It deals with the historical development of American unions, their local and international structure, their manifold activities. It explains how collective bargaining is carried on and what means are available for the adjudication of industrial disputes. In addition to a wealth of textual information there are invaluable appendices. These include texts of the constitutions of the AFL and CIO, names and addresses of the principal unions, statistics on memberships, strikes and benefits.

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The Inner Forum

Calendar of the Saints

IN STOWE, Vermont, there is published a "Catholic Calendar of Saints and Devotions"; it is produced there by the La Verna Publishing Company, which was formed for that one specific purpose when no publishing house already operating could be induced to bring out the calendar. It comprises 72 pages, spiral bound, a page for each week; the 1945-46 calendar also includes the Mass Ordo for each day. Despite the private nature of this venture, thousands of copies of the 1944-45 issue are now in use in each of the 48 States, in Canada, England, Ireland and Hawaii. It bears the imprimatur of Archbishop Cushing of Boston.

The principal feature of the calendar is the biographical material on the principal saints who are commemorated each day throughout the year. It is also replete with indulgenced prayers and indications of various devotions which take place during each week and season in question. It refers also to the privileges which such pious associations as the various scapular confraternities, Franciscan and Dominican Third Orders and members of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith may enjoy.

This calendar is edited and published by laymen with expert clerical advice. All in all it deals in some detail with more than 700 saints and blessed and gives brief historical notes on some 50 feasts of Our Lord and Our Blessed Lady. While the emphasis here is on the liturgical cycle of the saints, the calendar also notes all through the ecclesiastical year the course of the Advent to after-Pentecost cycle. It gives the rank of each feast day throughout the year and the color of the Mass vestments to be worn at the altar. Naturally it also includes the designation of holy days of obligation and those of fast and abstinence. The calendar sells for one dollar per copy and there are discounts for quantity sales as well as for priests, religious and charitable institutions. The new 1945-46 calendar begins December 2nd, the first Sunday in Advent, and the publishers request that all Christmas gift orders be sent them by October 31st.

CONTRIBUTORS

Rev. George H. DUNNE, S.J., is at present stationed at the University of Loyola at Los Angeles, Calif. His article, "The Sin of Segregation," published in THE COMMONWEAL for September 21, has attracted great notice. In digest form it will appear in the *Catholic Digest*, and orders for reprints exceed all records. We hope to be able to announce reprints for general sale very shortly.

Cuthbert WRIGHT has spent the summer in Quebec, Canada, and the rich impressions of that old city have been turned to his literary use. He is a member of the faculty of Assumption College, Worcester, Mass.

W. J. IGOE is a young Scottish Catholic journalist at present on the staff of the *Catholic Herald*, London, England.

Anne FREMANTLE is at present living in New York with her three children; she is engaged on a hagiographical work and on an anthology of non-Christian mystical writings.

Carl BALLIETT, JR., who used to write a column of record-reviews for THE COMMONWEAL and was associated with *Time-Life-Fortune*, is now employed by the Bethlehem Steel Company.

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